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ABSTRACT

In California community colleges there are 14,273 people who are employed full-time as instructors. Another 20,027 are employed as part-time faculty members. In the past three years there has been an estimated annual increase of 10 percent in the number of part-time faculty employed. Benefits of utilizing part-time instructors include: (1) The opportunity for students to study under outstanding instructors whose primary employment may be elsewhere. (2) The opportunity for instructors to use part-time employment as a means of beginning a career in postsecondary teaching. (3) The opportunity for colleges to respond quickly and efficiently to community needs within the boundaries of fincial resources available to them. Problems associated with part-time employment generally fall into two areas: (1) Recent court decisions have resulted in enormous confusion regarding the law pertaining to part-time teachers. (2) What benefits should be received by part-time instructors as compared to benefits received by full-time instructors? This keynote address delineates the issue involved in the part-time faculty controversy, and discusses the implications of various prosposed solutions to the problems. (Author/NHM)

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Remarks

The Part-time Faculty and the Community College

The Office of Public Information thought you might be interested in the following remarks by Dr. Leslie Koltai, chancellor of the Los Angeles Community College District.

presented at
Conference on Part-time Teachers
Sponsored by Legislative Committee,
Board of Governors of the
California Community Colleges.
Inglewood, Ca., Jan. 28, 1976

As I prepared to make these keynote remarks, I spent a great deal of time reviewing current studies and literature regarding the part-time teacher issue. In addition, I requested opinions from state and local administrators; from faculty leaders; and from a number of part-time instructors -- who find not only an interest but a direct involvement with the issues we are about to discuss. I would like to take this opportunity to discuss some of the opinions that were expressed and to apply those opinions to the statistical information that has only recently become available. It can be said, without any hesitation, that there are no absolutes in this controversy. As we discuss it, we should refrain from using phrases such as "right or wrong", "good and bad", and perhaps most important, we must be careful not to generalize conditions.

I have come here today not to present the panacea, the ultimate solution, but to provide an open and honest discussion of the issues that we must each face during this coming year. In a number of editorials that I have reviewed, I noted the re-occurring phrase, "equal pay for equal work". It is not the kind of phrase that one could or would want to dispute. It is a phrase that is as forthright as any American principle I might present to you. Unfortunately, it is a generalization that does not bring us any closer to a solution. It does not address itself to strict state budgetary limits. It does not deal with special credential requirements for part-time faculty. It is not concerned with the inflexibility that could result from universal tenure. It does not spell out the procedures we might apply to involve part-time faculty in college governance. Ladies and gentlemen, these are the issues. The process of resolving them will not and cannot be easy. Budgetary and instructional priorities are tightly intertwined. We will not achieve an ultimate justice, but a reasonable and realistic synthesis.

The employment of community college instructors on a part-time basis has provided many benefits ... and, unfortunately, a corresponding number of problems. The benefits of utilizing part-time instructors include:

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1. The opportunity for students to study under outstanding instructors whose primary employment may be in industry, the professions, business, or in other colleges and schools.

2. The opportunity for instructors to use part-time employment as a means of beginning a career in postsecondary teaching and as a means of obtaining income.

3. The opportunity for colleges to respond quickly and efficiently to community changing needs within the boundaries of financial resources available to them.

The problems associated with part-time employment, although many, generally fall into two areas:

1. Due to recent court decisions, there is enormous confusion regarding the law pertaining to part-time instructional personnel. Who is part-time? Who is temporary? Who is probationary? What is a full-time assignment?

2. Emotions have run exceedingly high when discussing what benefits should be received by part-time instructors as compared to those benefits received by full-time instructors.

Before we begin discussing the rather philosophical issues involved in the part-time faculty controversy, it would be wise to define them in terms of a statistical backdrop. In California community colleges there are 14,273 people who are employed full-time as instructors. In addition, another 20,027 people are employed as part-time faculty members. Therefore, we are talking about a sizeable and growing proportion of certificated staff in the California community college. In the past three years there has been an estimated increase annually of 10% in the number of part-time faculty employed.

This, however, is not the complete story. In terms of full-time equivalents, 72% of community college instruction in the State is handled by full-time faculty or by full-time faculty members who have decided to also take a part-time assignment. The bulk of instruction, then, is still carried by full-time faculty members with the use of part-time faculty distributed fairly uniformly through all instructional categories.

It is perhaps wise to pause for a moment and ask exactly what kind of people are occupying these positions we characterize as part-time. Over 77% of these people are employed full-time in another capacity--in business, private industry, in public administration or in another educational institution. It would be logical to expect that this 77% would derive the majority of their income and benefits from their primary, full-time permanent positions.

Therefore, when we talk about part-time instructors, we need to be careful not to generalize their intentions and expectations. Each category is different. Each deserves to be considered individually.

For a moment let's talk about a specific issue: Pro-rata pay and equivalency of benefits. It would be difficult and misleading to attempt to estimate what an equitable pro-rata pay would be. There are three obvious problems:

1. Part-time faculty are paid on an hourly basis while full-time faculty are paid on an annual basis. This is a particularly significant difference when we try to pin down exactly how much per teaching hour a full-time faculty member makes.

   For instance, in the Los Angeles Community College District:

   *an instructor teaching vocational block classes, 25 hours per week earns anywhere between $11.68 an hour and $23.45 an hour.

   *an instructor teaching laboratory and activity classes, 20 hours a week, earns anywhere between $14.60 and $29.31.

   *an instructor teaching academic type classes 15 hours per week earns anywhere between $19.46 and $39.33.

   *and, finally, an English instructor teaching 12 hours per week can earn anywhere between $24.33 and $48.85 per hour.

2. The next question that arises: What constitutes an "assignment" of a full-time or part-time faculty member? This is not clearly spelled out in teaching contracts or in the policy of most districts. When we talk about an assignment are we simply talking about teaching hours -- or holding office hours -- or serving on committees -- or correcting papers -- or attending orientation meetings -- or participating in professional faculty development?

3. Finally, there is no state-wide pattern concerning the number of hours per week a full-time instructor is expected or required to work. I must emphasize, when we approach this problem it is difficult to achieve a consensus on the state level, the trustee, administrative, staff, or the faculty level.

   If it is assumed that full-time instructors are paid on the basis of a 15-hour workweek, it would cost approximately $90 million to increase the pay of part-time instructors to a level comensurate with the pay of full-time instructors. Assuming a 30-hour work week for full-time faculty as the basis for computation, the total cost would be approximately $35 million statewide. In the Los Angeles Community College District, it would cost approximately $8 to $10 million to institute pro-rata pay for part-time instructors. When we are talking about this kind of money -- we are not only talking about budgetary priorities of individual college districts, but the priorities in Sacramento and the priorities in Washington, D.C. We must ask the question, is the regular faculty prepared to accept reduced salary increases in order to finance pro-rata pay for part-time instructors?

The next question that arises seems to be whether it is fair to have a person work for an indefinite period of time in a college district without accruing some kind of permanency or tenure. If such tenure or probationary status were extended to part-time instructors one would have to deal with the following types of implications:

1. When a part-time permanent instructor's class must be closed because of insufficient enrollment, such an employee could bump any regular permanent instructor from teaching an overload or extra class. Remember, regular instructors only obtain tenure in their regular full-time assignments.

2. In the numerous instances where employees are assigned more than one location, if such an employee were to gain probationary or permanent status, which location would be responsible for insuring the continued employment of such an employee?

3. What rights would part-time probationary or permanent employees have with respect to:

   -- assignment to vacant full-time positions?
   -- assignment to additional classes until employed on a full-time basis?
   -- assignment to day classes when a part-time employee may have greater seniority than a full-time employee?

4. Whenever student enrollment declined in a particular subject area, it is possible that an employee who was hired to teach at one college would be assigned to another college on the basis of seniority. This would have to be without any choice on the part of the receiving college administration or the department of the institution involved.

Ladies and gentlemen, these represent just a few of the problems of definition -- of priorities -- and of basic logistics. The questions that I have asked, the problems that I have posed cannot be solved with a series of simplistic, uncritical generalizations. It is not a problem that we can forget or sweep under the rug. The problem that we face must be resolved and resolved expeditiously.

I would want to make it clear that nothing I have said should detract from the significant role played by the part-time instructor. The Carnegie Commission predicts an extraordinarily bright future for the community college -- predicated on our ability to act quickly and with flexibility. The part-time instructor provides for that flexibility while staying within strict budgetary limits. The part-time instructor provides administration with the possibility of hiring and releasing instructors as the instructional needs and demands of a community change and fluctuate. In a recent meeting with faculty leaders, the comment was made, "well, if you're in favor of part-time teachers, why not part-time administrators?" As a matter of fact, I happen to think it's an excellent idea. As new programs are developed, it becomes obvious that administrators should be added. When such programs are changed or dropped, it should become equally obvious that administrative talent should be shifted or released. The concept of part-time, non-tenured teaching staff is incredibly important to the survival of the community college in California as well as nationally. As each year passes we see instructional programs being created and outdated. In order to cope with the demand of a changing society, the community college must possess an advanced degree of flexibility.

As the name COMMUNITY COLLEGES clearly denotes, these are institutions to prepare citizens for their ultimate role in society. What better way to achieve this end than to engage those working 40 to 72 hours each week in many areas of service: from the certified public accountant to the zoologist; from the alchemist to the engineer; or from the executive to the supervisor. These people are already qualified and anxious to assist with the education of all. They welcome the opportunity to share their expertise with students. Without them, our community colleges would not be in a position to offer the many excellent courses so vital to the needs of this area, the state, and the nation.

In closing, I would like to lay the responsibility of this problem squarely on the shoulders of those people who must help make the decisions -- who will be most dramatically affected. Faculty members -- both part-time and full-time -- must be concerned with what is about to happen. We are talking

about a consideration of rights and benefits that must have far-reaching effects into both sectors. Administrators -- on federal, state and local levels -- these decisions will undoubtedly affect us in terms of personnel policies, budgetary priorities, and the extent to which we can seek additional funds. The students in every community college up and down this state must be concerned, because it is their instructional program that will be affected in terms of diversity of programs and the opportunity of the open door. I look forward to a report of your questions, comments, criticisms, and hopefully, your proposals for change. As you enter upon this conference, I hope you will not view the situation as adversaries, but as concerned individuals who look for realistic solutions within limited financial resources.

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